



Monthly Member Update

A message from the Chair

Hello everyone, and welcome to our refreshed Destination Orkney newsletter. Our goal is to keep you, our valued members, informed about local and industry-wide developments that may impact your business and Orkney's tourism landscape.

Since our well-attended AGM in November, we have restructured with a refreshed board eager to represent you and navigate the changes facing Orkney's tourism industry this year. Our board brings a wealth of expertise across key sectors, including food & drink, jewellery, travel planning, marketing, finance, and communications. We will hold monthly board meetings to monitor progress and key developments, with this newsletter serving as a channel for updates—so stay tuned! We are also exploring ways to make detailed meeting minutes available to members. Additionally, we may invite external stakeholders such as consultants or representatives from OIC and HIE to contribute their insights. If you're interested in joining the board or any consolation meetings, please let us know—we welcome your input.

As announced at the AGM, we have now established subgroups dedicated to various tourism-related topics. These groups, made up of members, non-members, and engaged individuals within the community, are passionate about shaping the future of Orkney tourism. Their mission is to ensure the industry's voice is heard and to provide positive representation on key tourism matters. If you have a particular area of interest, we encourage you to get involved.

Our current funding will run out by the end of March 2025. While we will draw on reserve funds to continue delivering core services, we are actively seeking additional funding opportunities to sustain our work. We will also engage with OIC and HIE to explore support for the subgroups as independent projects, allowing us to continue representing and assisting our Orkney.com members while advocating for the industry on key upcoming issues.

On a personal note, I want to extend my gratitude for electing me as Chair of Destination Orkney. At Sheila Fleet Jewellery, we have benefited greatly from Orkney's tourism industry, and I am keen to give back—both by supporting the sector and by learning from others. To enhance communication, we are developing initiatives such as a dedicated WhatsApp group and networking events throughout the year. These will provide opportunities for members to share information, raise questions, and support one another in a positive and collaborative way.

In the meantime, we remain committed to working on your behalf and greatly appreciate your support. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions, and we wish you all a fantastic 2025 season!

Destination Orkney Board Members

Chairperson

Martin Fleet

Secretary

Lukas Princ

Treasurer

Diane Johnston

Jackie Sinclair

Operations

John Berry

Social Media

Kinlay Francis

Marketing

Lauren Miller

Nicky Bichan

Paul Hudd

Stephen Kemp

We'll be telling you a bit more about each board member every month. Let us know if you have any questions you'd like us to ask them!

1st Floor
The Travel Centre
West Castle Street
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1GU



Get in touch

07595 374566

admin@destinationorkney.co.uk

Mon-Thurs 9am-5pm

Working Groups



Visitor Information Centre – researching options and ways to retain an in-person signposting for visitors and looking at how we could utilise the building to meet community needs

Visitor Levy Scheme – gaining evidence on the challenges faced by accommodation providers and the potential impact caused by introducing a levy and options for lobbying local Government

Cruise Levy Scheme – gaining knowledge on the opportunities and challenges posed in implementing such a levy, working with stakeholders and local and national Government

Marketing – looking at better ways of communication between members and supporting members in promoting and marketing their business

Voluntourism – engaging with visitors to explore and research a scheme to allow people to volunteer as part of their visit to Orkney. £5k of funding has been secured to conduct research into how the Faroes [‘closed for maintenance’](#) scheme has been successful.

The Visitor Information Centre group led by Martin Fleet (Sheila Fleet Jewellery) and the Visitor Levy Scheme group led by Fiona Smith (Kierfield Cottages) have had initial meetings and progress will be shared with members soon. We are yet to appoint a subgroup lead for Cruise Levy, Marketing and Voluntourism so please drop us an [email](#) with the group you would like to know more about or to be part of the conversation.

How Orkney Marketing is benefitting you

- Traffic on orkney.com has increased year on year, with 1.45 million visitors and 5.2 million page views from Nov 2023 to Oct 2024
- Spikes in web traffic during tourism campaigns lead to sustained momentum even after the campaigns end.
- High engagement on the late availability page - This page ranks #9 in the top 20 most visited pages and plays a critical role in generating bookings.
- Planning is underway for a revised Orkney.com Today Page making information easier for visitors arriving - <https://www.orkney.com/today>
- Focus continues on increasing visitor numbers and spend during the shoulder seasons: March-April and October-December. Highlighting sustainable tourism experiences to align with Orkney’s brand values and encouraging longer stays and higher-spending visitors to support local prosperity.



Opportunities for Members

Inclusion in blogs - Local business features to showcase new or unique offerings

Advertise your late availability (dates within the following 4 week period) to fill up any gaps you have in bookings

2024 Orkney Tourism Awards



Join us on Saturday 1 March to celebrate the success of Tourism in Orkney.

Winners across 8 categories will be presented their awards after an evening of food and good company. Secure your ticket by emailing admin@destinationorkney.co.uk

ORKNEY.COM

If you are planning an event that would appeal to visitors, get in touch to see if this can be added to the [orkney.com](https://www.orkney.com) events page.

Events can include anything from a poetry evening, prop in talk, music event or a one-off special event that visitors might be interested in!

<https://www.orkney.com/events>

Spotlight on a Board Member



Jackie Sinclair Orkney Retreats

I have a background in performance improvement consultancy. Travelling internationally for work gave me the privilege of experiencing some outstanding hospitality. In 2020 I stopped travelling and set up Orkney Retreats, merging my skills and experiences to provide a niche, high quality hospitality business in Orkney. I've lived in Sanday for 30 years and raised a family here. I understand the challenges of running an outer-isles business having run several successful businesses in Sanday. I am a natural collaborator, and network closely with other Sanday businesses through Sanday Business Forum, because together we are stronger and more successful.



VisitScotland Connect is a 2-day business-to-business travel trade event, connecting Buyers (tour operators) from around the globe with Scottish tourism businesses. These Buyers are looking for new ideas to 'package' and sell to visitors planning a trip to Scotland.

Did you know we promote your business and Orkney as a destination at this event?

For 2025, we will have Kinlay Francis from Orkney Uncovered and Lee Payne from Highland Park covering both days with support from Cheryl Chapman from VisitScotland on day one. The past few years have shown a growing demand for sustainable travel, more active, immersive and interactive experiences and interest in out of season travel.

Experiences during the quieter months, including the weather, northern lights and slower pace of life appeals to lots of independent travellers so whilst we know that Orkney is extremely busy during the summer months, marketing remains important all year round.

Attendance at this event is possible due to funding from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Orkney Islands Council.

We will be in touch with all members soon with more information.

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